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GAZA

REF: A. DOHA 176

B. DOHA 181

Classified By: CDA Michael A. Ratney for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

(SBU) KEY POINTS

-- Qatar reached agreement in late April to contribute USD 40 million to several UN agencies working on Gaza reconstruction and humanitarian relief operations.

-- The GOQ is using a private organization, Qatar Charity, as its agent for interfacing with the UN agencies. Qatar Charity is hoping to position itself as a humanitarian



partner when the GOQ wants to use aid to underpin its political initiatives.

COMMENTS

-- (C) The Qatari donation to UN agencies is in line with the kind of donations the USG has been encouraging Qatar to make. However, this contribution is dwarfed by the size of outstanding Qatari pledges for Gaza aid, most of which may go through non-UN or non-PA channels. The GOQ has pledged to contribute USD 250 million through the Gulf Cooperation Council's own reconstruction mechanism, while Qatar Charity pledged to provide USD 100 million in support of Gaza relief (the recently announced USD 40 million comprises one portion of that).

-- (SBU) During and after the conflict, private Qatari charities raised millions of dollars, and sent small medical teams and supplies into Gaza. Because they still lack established relief networks in Gaza, they may be turning to more established mechanisms such as the UN as a means to distribute funds.

-- (S/NF) Qatar Charity is also an entity of concern to the USG due to some of its suspect activities abroad and reported links with extremists. In March 2008, Qatar Charity was listed as a priority III terrorism support entity (TSE) by the Interagency Intelligence Committee on Terrorism (IICT), after having demonstrated intent and willingness to provide financial support to terrorist organizations willing to attack US persons or interests, or provide witting operational support to Priority I-II terrorist groups.

End Key Points and Comments.

1. (SBU) Laurie Kitch, a U.S. expat and former UNFAO official who is currently Director of Programs for Qatar Charity, told Econoff Fabrycky May 5 that his organization will handle the allocation, programming, and monitoring of the USD 40 million contribution from the Government of Qatar. According to Kitch, funds will be distributed as follows:

-- USD 10 million to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)
-- USD 10 million to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)
-- USD 10 million to the World Food Program (WFP)
-- USD 5 million to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)
-- USD 2.75 million to the UN Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN)
-- USD 2.25 million to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (UNFAO)



2. (SBU) Kitch said Qatar Charity has a payment schedule established with each organization and most are two-year projects. The charity just hired a new head of its Gaza office (NFI) and will second two people to UNRWA. Part of the agreements signed by Qatar Charity Chairman Ghanim Bin Saad Al-Saad commit the UN agencies to help build the capacity of Qatar Charity to manage and deliver program services.

Background on Qatar Charity

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3. (SBU) Qatar Charity is the most publicly-active charity in Qatar, and probably the largest. Though it is a conservative Muslim organization, it is beginning to look at partnerships with Western charities. It has historically benefited from close ties to the GOQ (e.g., press reports from at least 2001 on indicate the GOQ directed Qatar Charity to help with specific humanitarian issues). According to its last annual report, it spent about USD 48.7 million in 2007 on various projects. It is currently experiencing organizational turmoil as a new board (installed in December) tries to determine how much to focus on domestic social welfare issues versus international assistance. Qatar Charity has humanitarian and development activities in 40 countries, and offices in 12 countries, according to Kitch, ranging from 5 to 20 people in each location. The organization has 17 personnel in Khartoum with a branch in Darfur. Kitch said Qatar Charity is hoping to expand its humanitarian programs in Sudan and may work with Mercy Corps in this regard. Qatar Charity representatives will visit the U.S. in June, in part to meet with Mercy Corps and discuss future cooperation. The charity also has a partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council, including a staff development program.

4. (SBU) Kitch said the new Qatar Charity Board appears eager to partner with the GOQ. In particular, they realize Qatar has the ambition and resources to be a significant development/humanitarian assistance player. With the GOQ's currently weak organizational capabilities in this field, Qatar Charity is trying to position itself as a humanitarian partner for the government when the GOQ wants to use aid money to support its political initiatives.

Ratney

